

SAFE Patrol Offers Help on Interstates and Parkways

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A flat tire, dead engine, or personal emergency. All bad experiences made even worse when it happens on the highway. But help through a department of transportation program is allowing people to get through those hard times offering everything from gas to minor car repairs.

Kentucky's SAFE Patrol program offers assistance during emergencies on interstates and parkways. The coverage area includes 13 parkways across Kentucky as well as a number of interstates including I-24, I-65, I-64, and I-75.



As NewsChannel 6's Todd Faulkner tell us, people traveling through Kentucky can now dial three numbers for help they're not 911. The sign on this truck says it all-SAFE Patrol. Inside, everything a stranded driver might need if their car breaks down. Operator Leroy Carroll is ready to deliver help. "And you always want to be prepared for an accident. Somebody with a flat tire, somebody with a muffler dragging on the ground," said Carroll.

You name it, Carroll has it. "I keep signs, shovels and stands, a compressor to fill up air" said Carroll.

First aid kits to fire extinguishers, even a hard hat. All of these compartments on the SAFE Patrol truck have items a stranded driver might need in an emergency, including special features to warn other drivers of what's happening. Flashing lights on every corner of the truck, and a message board on top displaying arrows and giving special directions to other drivers. Carroll let NewsChannel 6 tag along while he patrolled the highway.

"I've had to get a canoe off the Illinois bridge, I've had flat tires, several gas-people out of gas" Carroll said.

Within minutes-word of a driver who needs help. Melvin Earles' hitch on the back of his truck broke lose and thinks the safe patrol is great. "Shucks, that's one of the best things the state ever come up with" exclaimed Earles.

For Carroll, just another day at work.

"I got to help people out of a bad situation, into a good one, and when you go have home you feel good. We're just out here to take care and make sure they get home," said Carroll.

The 'SAFE Patrol' emergency number is 511 or 877-FOR-KYTC. Tax dollars, grants and federal money fund the safe patrol program. Similar programs are established in Illinois, Tennessee, and Missouri.

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